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C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 000006

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/E AND A/S FRAZER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/02/2019

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - JOURNALIST KILLED ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

Classified By: Somalia Unit Counselor Bob Patterson. Reasons: 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The year 2009 began tragically for Somali journalism with the murder of Radio Shabelle reporter Hassan Mayow Hassan on New Year's Day. Hassan reportedly was on the way to cover an armed conflict between two groups when he was killed. The Somali media variously allege that Hassan was either targeted or caught in the crossfire between the two groups. A senior Radio Shabelle staffer alleged to us that militia, possibly associated with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), targeted Hassan for reporting that they considered to be unfavorable to the TFG. The TFG Deputy Prime Minister separately insisted to us that Hassan was caught in the middle of a running gun battle between Afgoye militias and al-Shabaab. End summary.

Journalist Killed Eleven Hours Into the New Year

¶2. (SBU) Hassan Mayow Hassan, who had been Radio Shabelle's Afgoye-based reporter for six years, was killed in Afgoye just before 11 a.m. on New Year's Day. Hassan's death was a distressing beginning to 2009 after a somewhat improved 2008. (Two Somali journalists were killed in 2008, one from collateral damage from an explosion. Eight journalists were killed in 2007.)

¶3. (C) Our sources indicate that Hassan was in the area to cover a battle between two armed groups in Afgoye. Mukhtar Mohammed, Programs Director for Radio Shabelle, alleged to us that three militia/police associated with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) approached Hassan as he was walking in the street. The police reportedly accused Hassan of being sympathetic to the opposition and of producing inaccurate reports about their work. Mohammed stated that as Hassan walked away after denying the accusations and being told to leave, the police shot him twice in the back of the head.

¶4. (C) TFG Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Abdisalaam Aden told us from Mogadishu January 2, after consulting with the Secretary General of the Benadir Administration, that Hassan had been caught in the middle of a running gun battle between members of an Afgoye local militia, not associated with the TFG, and al-Shabaab. Post will make every effort to better determine the circumstances surrounding Hassan's death.

¶5. (SBU) Mohammed told us that Hassan normally reported on social issues such as the plight of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and health problems among Somalis. Hassan, age 36, is survived by a wife and five children.

